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SIMULATING LEPROSY.

BY

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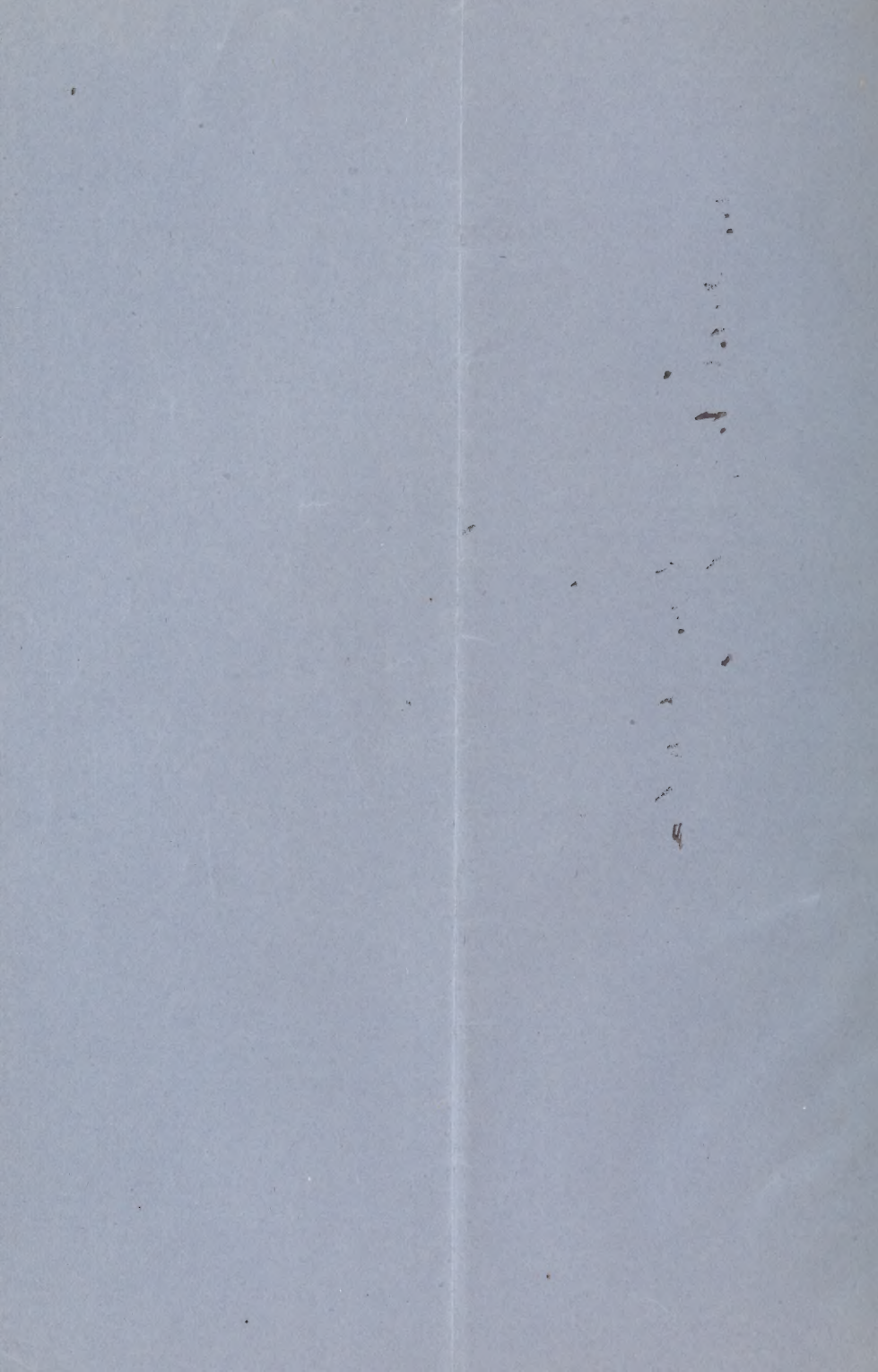
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A Case of Hereditary Syphilis Simulating Leprosy.*

By A. H. OHMANN-DUMESNIL, A. M., M. D.

WITHOUT desiring to make any apology for the following short clinical report, it may not be altogether out of place to preface it by a few general remarks. That cases similar to the one I am about to describe are unusual, a glance at the literature of syphilis will indicate. That the present case is one sufficiently important to call attention to the increasing number of cases of leprosy found in this country, would seem to indicate. This is the more important since those unfortunates, afflicted with the latter disease, are isolated and removed from all association with friends and relatives. On this account alone a most thorough diagnosis is absolutely necessary; and the following case is reported also, because it had been diagnosed and treated as one of lepra.

CASE. Chas. T—— was first seen by me in 1886. He was about 18 years of age at the time. Inquiry into his history elicited a number of facts which, together with a personal examination, established a tolerably certain diagnosis. His father, twenty-five years previously contracted syphilis, and had been to Europe for treatment. He is still living, and has an ulcer of the leg of very suspicious appearance, as I learned from his attending physician, who was the one to present Chas. T—— to my notice, in order to obtain a diagnosis. Otherwise the father apparently enjoys a fair degree of health. Of the mother, little or nothing of any value could be learned.

* Reprint from the "Journal of Cutaneous and Genito-Urinary Diseases," October, 1888.



Up to the age of fifteen, the patient had apparently not exhibited any symptoms which would lead his parents to suspect that he had any general disease. They had not noticed any eruption. At this time, however, an ulcer



appeared on one of his legs. His physician informed me that his skin began to get scaly, and that he was informed by an oculist that there existed the remains of an interstitial keratitis. His hair fell out, he lost the nasal bones, and his palate became affected in the process.

When I saw him he presented the appearance shown in the annexed engraving. There existed a general tubercular infiltration of the face and ears; the bridge of the nose had disappeared; the organ itself, having flattened more or less, was broad at its base, and there were well marked ridges in the face. The lobes of the ears were considerably thickened and enlarged, as well as the conchæ. The hands also exhibited the same general characteristics. On the body, the remains of a few ulcers were plainly to be seen. The hair, light in color, was scanty. Voice high pitched, and not very distinct in articulation. The skin was more or less velvety to the touch, and apparently hypertrophied; it was very thick, and yet it had more or less of an elastic feel. The secretory functions of the skin were impaired, and in some places absent. Nervous sensibility was normal, and no nerves enlarged. Ganglia somewhat enlarged, but not painful.

As can be seen from the engraving, upon first looking at him, one would naturally suspect leprosy, and his disease was so diagnosticated by a physician who administered large doses of chaulmoogra oil with no benefit, but rather the reverse.

The patient was sent to Hot Springs, Ark., and apparently experienced some benefit. The plan of treatment which was followed in his case was about as follows, as given me by his attending physician, who has had him under treatment for about two years, and under which he has improved to quite a marked degree:

Iodide of potassium was given in gradually ascending doses from ten grains to two drachms, three times a day. After a time this was discontinued and he was placed on the Pill Burdo Comp. (Marks'), which may be described as follows:

Each pill weighs five one-fourth grains and is composed of the following: ext. *Berberis aquifolium*, ext. *rumex crispus*, ext. *cascara sagrada*, ext. *similax officinalis*, ext. *lappa minor*, ext. *trifolium pratense*, res. *stillingia*, res. *phytolacca*, res. *xanthoxylum*. He was given one pill

thrice daily for some considerable time, but as the improvement did not seem to be what was desired, one-eighth grain of proto iodide of mercury was added to each pill (Pill Burdo Comp. cum, hydrarg.) and given thrice daily. Under this medication, good results soon manifested themselves, and when last seen by me, the patient seemed in a fair way to recovery.

Very few external applications have been made in the case. While being treated for leprosy, chaulmoogra oil was applied externally for a time, and afterwards discontinued. At Hot Springs some mercurial applications were made, and under his last treatment he has been anointed on the face and hands with a mixture of a drachm of salicylic acid to the ounce of lanoline, and this has, in a great measure, tended to reduce the thickness of the skin.

It has been impossible to obtain another photograph of the case, as it stands at present. The patient is an individual whose mental faculties are not of a high order. He is very obstinate about showing himself, and positively refuses to sit for a photograph, and, latterly, has been evincing a dislike to speak of his condition. There is, however, but little hope that his face will ever return to a normal condition. His skin is much thinner, but there is some deposit which seems to bear the marks of a permanent nature.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

